

About this List

Wilderness travel means you must carry much less than you do in the regular world. Most experienced wilderness travelers will tell you that they bring about the same amount of gear on a three-day trip as they would on a three-week trip. Being comfortable on course means minimizing the weight you carry while not leaving anything necessary behind - the information below contains everything you need to strike this balance. Follow the guidelines on the list and you will be set up for success! ***Please bring everything on the list that is not specifically marked "optional."***

This list is designed to create an ideal combination of layers for very dynamic weather conditions. Because of these variable conditions each season, students might not use all of the clothing on this list. Depending on which retailer you purchase from, you may be able to return unused items. We suggest keeping tags on new purchases until worn. Please note you don't need to buy all name-brand clothing. You can shop at thrift stores, second-hand outdoor stores, or online discounted outdoor retailers to satisfy the clothing list. **The main considerations are weight, bulk, and quality.**

LAYERING

There are [three main layers](#) to understand about clothing for wilderness travel. Each layer serves a specific purpose and utilizes specific materials. Below are the layers and terms you will encounter when looking for outdoor gear. They are intended to be built on the previous layer(s), so that all can be worn at the same time if weather demands.

Base (Wicking) Layer

- Purpose: Keeps skin dry and comfortable while active or sleeping by wicking moisture away from skin
- Materials: synthetic (polyester or polypropylene blends), wool, silk

Middle (Insulation) Layer

- Purpose: Retains body heat to protect you from the cold.
- Materials: Fleece, wool, or synthetic (i.e. PrimaLoft, polyester)
- Fleece: This is a synthetic *pile* material which is a great insulator, but it's not windproof. In windy conditions, you'd wear your hard shell over your fleece to combine the wind-resistance and insulation.
- Wool: The natural material that (unlike cotton) keeps you warm when wet. As a bonus, wool is naturally odor- and bacteria-resistant.

Outer (Shell) Layer

- Purpose: Outermost layer that protects from the elements like rain, wind, and snow
- Hard Shell: These materials are waterproof, windproof and breathable. Look for items treated with a durable water repellent (DWR) finish such as Goretex, eVent, or VaporDry and labeled as "waterproof."
- Soft Shell: These are materials that are water- and wind-resistant but not waterproof. They are more breathable than hard shell materials.

A Note About Cotton: Cotton makes for comfortable clothing, but in the wilderness, it can be dangerous. Cotton dries extremely slowly and sucks away heat from the body, which can easily lead to hypothermia.

Synthetic and wool materials will keep you warm even when they are wet. *That is why we ask that most everything you bring is synthetic and nothing be made of cotton unless specifically noted on the packing list.*

Weather Conditions

Summer weather in the Northwest varies; most often warm, sunny days will be followed by mild nights. Rain is sporadic on the eastern side of the mountains where we run backpacking, mountaineering and rafting courses. Early summer courses may encounter some travel across residual snow fields, but for the most part everything is thawed out. Because of rapid snow melt, water sources are plentiful, but mosquitoes are often present. In the mountains, the temperature averages in the 70s with potential highs in the 80s and lows around freezing. On the river, triple-digit temperatures can be followed by intense but short-lived thunderstorms. You never really know what to expect, so come prepared by obtaining all the clothing on our list.

Packing for Your Course & Personal Luggage Storage

At the beginning of course, students will pack as a group. The instructors will call off each item from the gear list and assist you in choosing which items to pack for each section of course. Some items will be used during the entirety of course; others will be set aside in totes or bags and be staged for later parts of course. Any leftover clothing and luggage will be securely stored in our base camp warehouse for the duration of course. If there are items not mentioned on this list that you feel you might need, you can bring it to the start of course and ask the instructors' opinion while packing as a group.

Cell phones and valuables will be collected at the beginning of course, and will be returned at course end. Please have your departure itinerary arranged before course, and bring a copy for reference. We will ask that you power-down cell phones before they are collected since your next opportunity to charge them will be at the airport on your way home. Please bring a power cord to use at that time. Students under 18 are encouraged to text or call their parents as soon as they get service on departure day.

Gear List of Personal Items

Head			
Number	Item	Description	Price Estimate
1	Warm hat	Light "ski hat"; wool or synthetic	\$10 – \$30
1	Sun hat	Brimmed hat such as a baseball hat	\$10 – \$20
1-2	Sunglasses w/ keeper strap	100% UVA & UVB blocking. A keeper strap (such as Croakies brand) is necessary to keep your sunglasses from getting lost in rivers	\$25+
Hands			
Number	Item	Description	Price Estimate
1	Light Weight Liner Glove	Light Weight Liner Glove – Micro-fleece or other synthetic material – Thin running gloves work (to be used inside of bigger glove and around camp)	\$20

Feet (see included shoe guide for more specifications on shoes and boots)			
Number	Item	Description	Price Estimate
2-3	Liner Socks	Synthetic, very light weight, designed to be worn under hiking socks to prevent blisters	\$5 – \$10
3-4	Hiking Socks	Light-weight, crew height synthetic or wool	\$10 – \$20
1	Backpacking Boots	Backpacking boots. Please see our boot guide for details. You must break these in!	\$125 – \$200
1	Running Shoes	Lightweight running shoes; an older well-worn pair is acceptable	\$0 – \$100
1	Camp Shoes (Optional)	Instructors <i>may</i> allow one pair of very lightweight camp shoes. Must be VERY lightweight and closed-toed (Crocs or Sanuks work well)	
1	River Shoes	Amphibious Shoes, or meshy breathable running shoes work well. Sandals such as Chacos, Tevas, or Solomon with a sturdy ankle strap are okay. Make sure sandals will not come off when aggressively kicking in white water. Be aware sandal straps can cause blisters. Sandals increase exposure to sunburn and foot/toe injury.	\$0 - \$100
Upper Body			
Number	Item	Description	Price Estimate
2-3	Sports Bra	Synthetic with adequate support. Can be combined with shorts for swimming	\$20
2	T-Shirt	Lightweight synthetic	\$10 – \$30
1	Sun Shirt	Loose, lightweight, light color. Meant for sun protection. <i>May be cotton</i> – Instructors often use cotton button-down shirts from a thrift store for this purpose	\$0 – \$10
1	Long Underwear top	Lightweight synthetic, used as a base layer or sun shirt (hoods are a bonus)	\$20 – \$30
1	Puffy Coat or Fleece Jacket	Mid-weight synthetic fill. A hood is recommended. <i>Please do not bring down jackets as they do not insulate the body when wet.</i> Alternatively, you can bring an mid-weight fleece jacket – must be very thick and warm!	\$75 - \$200
1	Rain coat w/ hood	Often referred to as “hard shell.” Must be 100% waterproof (not water-resistant). Waterproof and breathable fabrics are strongly recommended. A hood is required. Light-weight is a bonus. (Marmot PreCip is a great option)	\$125 +
Lower Body			
Number	Item	Description	Price Estimate
3-5	Underwear	Synthetic. Flat-stitched seams are recommended to reduce chafing. Female students should bring an additional 1-2 pairs of cotton underwear to sleep in.	\$15 – \$20

1	Hiking Shorts	Synthetic, Comfortable to walk in (test for chafing on thigh or groin areas)	\$20 – \$30
1	River Shorts	Board Shorts, Swim Trunks, or Basketball style shorts (great for reducing chafing on boat material)	\$20
1	Long Underwear Bottom	Lightweight synthetic (insulated leggings are okay as long as they are full length)	\$20 – \$30
1	Hiking Pants	Lightweight nylon or softshell	\$50 – \$75+
1	Rain Pants	Often referred to as “hard shell.” Must be 100% waterproof (not water-resistant). Waterproof and breathable fabrics are strongly recommended. Light-weight is a bonus. (Marmot PreCip is a great option)	\$100 +
Accessories			
Number	Item	Description	Price Estimate
1	Head Lamp	LED-style only. No halogen bulbs.	\$30
1	Set of batteries	For your headlamp. One set for every week you will be attending.	
2	32 oz. Water Bottles	Wide mouth and durable. DO NOT BRING DISPOSABLE WATER BOTTLES. Nalgene, Sigg, and Kleen Kanteen are great brands. You may bring a hydration system such as Camelbak or Platypus in addition to 2 water bottles. Screw tops only - no flip-tops or straws.	\$10 - \$30
1	Bandana	Cotton Bandana. Female students should bring 2 bandanas – wash before course for softness	\$5
1	Bug Head Net	Netting worn over the head to keep the bugs away	\$10
1	Camera	Optional. Do not bring anything larger than a small point-and-shoot. A shared “course camera” will be provided. Photos from this camera will be uploaded to the OB Facebook page up to one month after course ends.	n/a
1	Sarong	Optional. A large cotton sarong is useful for changing in/out of your wet clothes on the river.	\$5
1	Watch	Watch with alarm, waterproof and inexpensive	\$10
Toiletries			
Number	Item	Description	Price Estimate
n/a	Prescription Eyewear	Contacts, solution and glasses. Be certain to have a backup to your primary eyewear (if you wear contacts, you must bring glasses)	n/a
1-2	Toothbrush & Toothpaste	Travel-sized toothpaste	\$3
1	Hand sanitizer	Alcohol based, 3oz	\$3

n/a	Prescription Medications	MUST be declared during medical screening process. Students will not be allowed on course with undisclosed prescription medication. All prescription medications must be in their original containers. No loose medications please!	n/a
n/a	Feminine Supplies	An ample supply of your preferred product. Changes in diet, schedule and exercise can unexpectedly induce menstruation on course	n/a
1	Bug Repellent	Smallest available; no aerosol	\$3
1	Lip Balm	SPF 20+	\$3
1-2	Sunscreen	Small tubes, water/sweat-resistant, SPF 30+; no aerosol	\$5
1	Baby wipes	Optional. Smallest package available.	
1	Lotion	Optional. Small bottle, unscented.	
1	Chafing Balm	Optional for those who chafe. A small tube or stick is preferable to a large heavy one.	
<p>***If you would like to purchase the NW Outward Bound Toiletry Kit, choose the Toiletry Kit option when paying online or contact your Course Advisor. The kit includes travel-size toothpaste & toothbrush, hand sanitizer, bug repellent, lip balm and sunscreen.</p>			
Other Necessary Items			
Number	Item	Description	Price Estimate
1	Travel Documents	Copies of your travel itinerary & personal identification. Copies of NW Outward Bound School's contact phone numbers in case of a travel delay	n/a
1	Travel Money	Reasons to bring cash: Airport snacks, checked luggage, memorabilia from the Outward Bound Student Store (hats, mugs, quote books, etc.). At course end, students are required to pay for lost or damaged gear due to neglect or abuse.	\$50
1	Clean Clothes and towel	A set of clean clothes for the way home, and small towel for post course.	n/a

Gear List of Items Provided by Outward Bound

Outward Bound provides all necessary technical equipment including helmets, ice axes, ropes, wetsuits, dry suits, etc. We also provide a full sleeping system including a sleeping bag, sleeping bag liner, closed-cell foam sleeping pad, and ground sheet. Outward Bound provides backpacks, shelters, cooking equipment, and any soap or shampoo necessary for post-course clean-up before departure.

If you DO wish to bring your own backpack or sleeping system, here are our minimum standards for what MAY be acceptable for these items:

- **Backpacks** – need to have a minimum capacity of 80 liters, should carry 45-60 lbs. comfortably and be an internal frame design
- **Sleeping bags** – need to be made from synthetic materials (down fill is not appropriate for our purposes) and have a 0 degree warmth rating

- Sleeping pads – can be $\frac{3}{4}$ to full size in length. Can be made of closed-cell foam (Ridge-Rest or Z-Rest) or be inflatable (Therma-Rest). If you bring an inflatable pad you must bring a patch kit as well.

If you bring your own equipment, your instructors will inspect it during course start. If it does not meet our standards you can store it in a secure location at our base camp during your course.

FOOTWEAR: WHAT KIND OF FOOTWEAR DO YOU NEED?

Backpacking Boots		
	<p>Backpacking boots are meant to offer ankle support and rigidity in order to comfortably negotiate uneven and varied terrain. Backpacking boots have shock-absorbing composite rubber soles, injection-molded midsole/shanks/plates and soft, yet supportive, synthetic or leather uppers. Through the use of state of-the-art materials, it is now possible to purchase a boot that is at once relatively lightweight, comfortable, supportive, and weatherproof. It is extremely important to break in boots before course. Boots should be Gore-Tex and designed specifically for backpacking. Summer conditions call for lighter, more breathable boots. Clunky, thick boots may cause sweat, discomfort, and blisters.</p>	<p>Examples Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salomon Quest 4D II GTX • Lowa Tibet GTX • Asolo TPS 520 GV Evo • Salomon X Alp Mtn GTX • Lowa Arco GTX • Garmot Rambler GTX • Merrell Crestbound GTX
River Shoes		
 or... 	<p>River shoes come in two different categories. You can choose from either when deciding what to bring.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. River Shoes – These are favored over sandals because of their full-foot protection and amphibious nature. Their mesh materials allow rapid drying and their sticky tread offers stability from slippery terrain. 2. River Sandals – these were created for river travel. They include a heel strap to keep the shoe snug to your foot when swimming aggressively, and a sturdy sole to protect your feet when walking in shallow water on sharp, slippery rocks. <p>OR Old athletic shoes – Can be used as long as they are meshy and breathable (waterlogged shoes cause foot problems)</p>	<p>Examples Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Astral Brewer • Astral Rassler • Astral Loyak • Chaco Outcross • Salomon Techamphibian 3 • Chaco Yampa • Keen Clearwater • Teva Men's Bomber Sandal

About Boots

There is no single piece of equipment that will make a bigger difference in keeping you comfortable on course than boots. The single-most important factor in choosing a boot is the fit. They won't feel like your old, broken-in running shoes or your flip-flops, but they should be comfortable! Here are some general things to keep in mind:

- Do not buy hunting, jungle or work boots – they simply won't stand up to the rigors of course. Purchase only boots specifically designed for backpacking or mountaineering (depending on your course)
- Try to buy your boots from a store that specializes in outdoor sports, and find a knowledgeable salesperson to help you with your decision
- If you have any questions, or want to know if a boot not listed here is appropriate, please contact your course advisor

Finding the Right Fit

A quality store that sells mountaineering or backpacking gear is the best place to start. Try on a variety of boots from various manufacturers – each company's boots fit differently. Some advice:

- Wear the sock system (liner socks + hiking socks) that you intend to wear on course
- Try boots on later in the day, as your feet tend to be largest at that time
- When trying on boots, make sure to walk around a lot – uphill, downhill, on edges
- Your boots should fit comfortably, but not be so big that your feet are swimming and not so small that your toes slam into the front of the boot when walking downhill
- If your boots do not have a waterproof liner, make certain to purchase waterproofing and treat your boots before you come to course
- Summer conditions call for lighter, more breathable boots. Clunky, thick boots may cause sweat, discomfort, and blisters. Look online at suggestions from our list above before going to a retailer
- Consider purchasing an aftermarket insole, such as Superfeet. These may help with boot comfort and support, depending on your individual foot
- Once you've purchased your boots, wear them! Taking the time to break them in before course is **critical** to your comfort and success on course

Remember you can always contact your Course Advisor with any questions! We want to help set you up for the most successful experience possible.